

HAWAII COALITION FOR DADS

# Hawai'i Dads

(Makua kàne)

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## *Calling Local Dads...*

### **All Pro Dad's Day group at Pearl Harbor**

The Pearl Harbor Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) is looking for a "Team Captain" and few dads to start an **All Pro Dad's Day group**.

If you're a father who wants to spend some great time together with your kids (sons and daughters) talking about subjects that matter the most, then the All Pro Dad's Day group events are perfect for you. The All Pro Dads Day group would meet for one hour once a month, typically at a restaurant for breakfast. Each father pays for his own family's meals and there may be guest speakers.

All Pro Dad's Day is free of charge and all help and materials will be provided by All Pro Dads ([AllProDads.com](http://AllProDads.com)). For more local information call Chet Adessa @ 473-4222/ext. 272 or email @ [chester.adessa@navy.mil](mailto:chester.adessa@navy.mil).



~HI Dads~

## **State Commission on Fatherhood**

### **Hawai'i Fatherhood Commission receives \$20,000 at K-1 World Grand Prix**

The State Commission on Fatherhood received an unexpected \$20,000 donation from the K-1 Corporation and Field's Corporation this summer. Fatherhood Commissioner Merton Chinen accepted the contributions between raucous matches at the K-1 World Grand Prix event at Aloha Stadium on Friday, July 29<sup>th</sup>.

The State Commission on Fatherhood was established without funding by the Legislative Act 156 in 2003. Although the Commission's sunset date was extended to June 30, 2007 by the 2005 Legislature, it still did not receive any funding to carry out its Legislatively mandated activities.

Fortunately, the K-1 Corporation contribution will allow the Commission to reimburse Neighbor Island Commissioners' travel expenses since it began meeting in December 2004. The Commission can also begin carrying out some fatherhood promotion activities and producing some fatherhood resource materials as it works to secure State funding during the 2006 Legislative session.

~HI Dads~

*"Dad—What did you do when you were young?"*

## Should you be honest with your kids?

Some day, you'll be sitting with your child, listening to the radio or watching a program on TV. Somebody will be talking about premarital sex, illegal drug use, breaking the law, or some other highly charged issue. And then, your child will start to ask questions. What did you do when you were younger? How often?

So how should you handle this? Do you just tell them everything, and hope they don't do the same things you did, or do you avoid telling the truth?



For a while, psychologists were suggesting to parents that the best strategy to use was telling the truth about your past.... Being honest with your kids was more important than any other consideration.

The problem with this strategy is that it doesn't take into account your child's maturity level. It doesn't consider their readiness to hear this kind of information. Some kids just aren't ready to handle the fact that Dad smoked pot when he was younger, or that he had sex with other women before he was married.

If you're telling your kids this kind of information just to feel better, and "get it off your chest," you're guilty of trying to make yourself feel better at the expense of your kids. This may not only shatter an image your kids have of you, it may seem like an endorsement for them to have the same kinds of experiences.

Kids often have an idealized vision of their parents (although their comments and behavior may belie this), and information about a parent's prior transgressions can be very difficult for them to handle. It adds confusion to an already complex and difficult relationship.

While honesty with your kids is important, one should also consider timing, and a child's readiness to hear. All

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(“...honest with your kids?” continued from page 2)

of these factors should be considered when fathers decide on a strategy to use with their kids. And when a strategy is used, it should be consistent.

Here are a few of the strategies that can be used with your kids, with a few of the advantages and disadvantages:

- ✓ **Only speak about your past if asked.** This strategy will work for almost everyone. There’s no need to go into your past transgressions if it’s not necessary....However, it’s important to be ready with your responses, because the questions can come at any time.
- ✓ **Tell your child that you’ll talk about these things at a later date.** If you don’t feel your child is ready for this kind of information, there’s no need to lie to them. It’s far better to be honest, and let them know you’ll fill them in at some later time. They may howl and accuse you of being guilty, so you’ll have to handle it.
- ✓ **If you do feel your child is ready to hear about your past [experiences] transgressions, make sure you tell them as little as they need to know.** They don’t need to know the specific details of what you did, or exactly how many times. If they ask for this information, you can tell them you’re not quite sure (which I believe for most fathers would be true). And by all means, don’t give them the message that, “I did these things, and look how well I’m doing now!” This is a clear message to your kids that doing these things can work for them, too.
- ✓ **Gather the “lessons learned” from your experiences, and relay that to your child.** If you had negative experiences, be very clear with your child concerning what these negative experiences were. Be careful not to preach to them. The “lessons learned” can be lost in a flash if your child feels “lectured to.” Just let them hear what you have to say, and make their own decisions. Your negative experiences will speak loudly enough. Whether you speak about your own experiences, or just talk about the perspective you now have as an adult, let them know the risks associated with the behaviors.
- ✓ **When your child asks about your past, find out the reason they’re asking.** Is it something they’re experiencing at school, or do they just want to find out some “secrets” about their parents? It’s important to make this issue about your child, and the reason for the questions, not about your past, and whether you did the “right” things. More often than not, your child is seeking some guidance on this issue, and would like to share your experience. Ask them directly about what’s going on, but ask in a way that shows concern, not in a way that accuses them.
- ✓ **This doesn’t have to be a huge dilemma for fathers to face.** Being prepared is the best way to turn this process into a learning experience for both sides. Fathers who want to remain “perfect” in their children’s eyes will struggle mightily with this issue. But your kids don’t need perfect fathers. They do need a father who’s willing to keep growing with them.

So tell them the truth. Just tell them as little as possible, and tell them when they’re ready.

From: Mark Brandenburg’s  
*Dads Don't Fix Your Kids Newsletter*, Aug. 2005  
(see: [www.markbrandenburg.com](http://www.markbrandenburg.com)).

~HI Dads~





## Father and Child Reunion

*The following excerpts are from Father and Child Reunion  
by Warren Farrell, Ph.D. (2001).*

### The Quiet Revolution

"One of the biggest demographic changes of the twentieth century's last two decades was the increase in the percentage of single-parent households headed by fathers from 10 percent to 19 percent; the percentage of single dads almost doubled! With neither sound nor fury.

"Moms moving out of the home has been a headline-creating revolution; dads moving into the home has been the quietest revolution.

"This trend will continue, to the point that father involvement will be to the twenty-first century family what Internet involvement will be to twenty-first century productivity. Dads are, if you will, in the infancy of their revolution to reenter the family, this time not only as money raisers, but as child raisers; not as killer-protectors, but as nurturer-connectors. Not to outdo Mom, but to do with Mom" (pp. 10-11).

### Empathy

"If there is one quality that I find is more essential to a successful and happy life than any other, it is empathy. It is at the core of family stability and love. I've never had a couple come to me and say, 'I want a divorce; my partner understands me.'

"Similarly, children who don't feel understood rebel, join gangs or cults, disappear into a bottle, or seek another world at the point of a needle.

Even in the work arena and the legal arena, it is rare for us to sue someone from whom we feel empathy.

"We usually think of empathy as something transmitted via the mother. Thus one of the more surprising findings about father involvement is that 'the amount of time a father spends with a child is one of the strongest predictors of *empathy* in adulthood.'<sup>7</sup>

"Although this finding emerged from a study that was done over a twenty-six-year period and was published in 1990, everyone still seems to be at a loss for a good explanation as to why Dad involvement leads to

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*(Father and Child Reunion, continued from page 4)*

***“I’ve never had a couple come to me  
and say, ‘I want a divorce;  
my partner understands me.’”***

empathy. From my observation of moms and dads, I believe it has to do with men’s style of discipline.

“Dads and moms are both prone to set boundaries with their children—moms even more so than dads, especially when safety is involved. But the big difference is in the enforcement. When the child violates the boundaries, Mom tends to repeat her request, escalate the volume of it, feel guilty about getting angry, and find reasons to be flexible with the promised consequences (or not have promised any consequences to begin with).

“Dad is more likely to mention a consequence up front, and when the boundary is violated, exact the consequence as if it were a deal made between the dad and child. The usual outcome is the child taking the father’s boundary-setting more seriously.

“How does treating boundaries seriously create empathy?  
**Teaching the child to treat boundaries seriously teaches the child to respect the rights and needs of others.** Thinking of another’s needs creates empathy.

“A child who learns that consequences are always negotiable focuses on how to manipulate the best negotiation, or on its desires, not the desires and needs of the person setting the boundary—or the person who is being intruded upon when the boundary was violated. I remember hearing when I was a kid, ‘good fences make good neighbors,’ without understanding the deeper reasons why.

***“Teaching the child to treat boundaries  
seriously teaches the child to respect  
the rights and needs of others.”***

“Although dads bring these values, they perpetuate their own devaluation by just doing what they do, rather than thinking about why they do it clearly enough to articulate it. Conversely, no one has valued dads enough to ask them.

“When a dad does not articulate his contribution, he also hurts his children. Studies are now finding that children thrive by their parents helping them interpret the world—for example, not just by setting boundaries, but by helping the children understand why...via kids’ values. For example, a dad might explain, ‘Kids who think of others are often popular; if you want popularity, think of others.’ It’s called the Child Incentive Plan. Or he might just take the children to a fence between two neighbors and ask them why they think the fence is there” (pp.30-31).

~HI Dads~

**Support the HAWAI'I COALITION FOR DADS.**

*Help promote involved, nurturing, responsible fatherhood in Hawai'i.*

☐ Please keep me informed about the activities of the Hawai'i Coalition for Dads.

☐ I would like to volunteer to help; contact me.

☐ Here is my contribution. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

~ Your donations are tax-deductible. ~

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to: **Hawai'i Coalition for Dads/PACT**

...and send it to: 1485 Linapuni St. #105

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819

Phone: 841-2245

E-mail: [HawaiiDads@pacthawaii.org](mailto:HawaiiDads@pacthawaii.org)

HAWAII COALITION FOR DADS

Promoting involved, nurturing, responsible fatherhood.

c/o PACT / Hana Like

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**GOALS:**

1. To increase community awareness about fatherhood.
2. To promote the availability and accessibility of quality, father-centered community resources.
3. To advocate for informed public policy regarding fatherhood.
4. To strengthen community collaboration in support of fatherhood.
5. To respect and honor everyone's unique role in children's lives.

The Hawai'i Coalition for Dads, with funding from the Hawai'i Children's Trust Fund under the umbrella of Parents And Children Together (PACT), is a group of individuals and organizations (including *Alu Like*, *Family Support Services of West Hawai'i*, *Good Beginnings Alliance*, *Hana Like Home Visitor Program*, *Head Start agencies*, *Kamehameha Schools' Extension Education Division*, *Molokai Mediation Center*, *PARENTS*, and *Navy Fleet and Family Support Center*) that shares information about services to fathers and promotes involved, nurturing, responsible fatherhood.

## Fatherhood & Family Resources (O`ahu)

Fathering & Parenting Education & Support:

1. **TIFFE** (Nurturing Fathers; Playgroups) (596-8433; [tiffe.org](http://tiffe.org))
2. **The Baby Hui** (groups for Dads, and Moms) (735-2484; [thebabyhui.org](http://thebabyhui.org))
3. **Navy Fleet & Family Support Center** (Boot Camp For New Dads) (473-4222; [greatlifeohawaii.com](http://greatlifeohawaii.com))
4. **PARENTS** (Confident Parenting Classes) (235-0488)
5. **Parents Without Partners** (262-6442)
6. **The Parent Line** (Info & Referral) (526-1222; [theparentline.org](http://theparentline.org))
7. **AUW – 211**; [auw.org/211](http://auw.org/211)
8. **HPIRG** (HI Parental Information & Resource Centers) (841-6177; [hawaiiipirc.org](http://hawaiiipirc.org))
9. **SPIN** (Special Parent Information Network) (586-8126; [spinhawaii.org](http://spinhawaii.org))
10. **Big Brothers Big Sisters** (support for single dads and moms) (521-3811; [bigshonolulu.org](http://bigshonolulu.org))
11. **Families For R.E.A.L.** (Leeward: 453-6478; Windward: 233-5656)
12. **Good Beginnings Alliance** (Playgroups) (531-5502; [goodbeginnings.org](http://goodbeginnings.org))
13. **ALU LIKE** (Hawaiian families) (535-6700; [alulike.org](http://alulike.org))
14. **Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center** (Hawaiian families) (847-1302; [qlcc.org](http://qlcc.org))
15. **PACT** (Family Centers; Hana Like; Head Start; Family Peace Center) (847-3285; [pacthawaii.org](http://pacthawaii.org))

Family Counseling:

1. **Child & Family Service** (681-3500; [cfs-hawaii.org](http://cfs-hawaii.org))
2. **Catholic Charities Family Services** (536-1794; [catholiccharitieshawaii.org](http://catholiccharitieshawaii.org))
3. **Hawaii Psychological Assn.** (521-8995; [hawaiipsych.org](http://hawaiipsych.org))
4. **Kaiser Medical Center** (432-0000; [kaiserpermanente.org](http://kaiserpermanente.org))
5. **HMSA** (948-6111; [hmsa.com](http://hmsa.com))
6. **Aloha Care** (973-1650; [alohacare.com](http://alohacare.com))
7. **Med-QUEST** (587-3521; [med-quest.us](http://med-quest.us))
8. Suicide prevention help (**ACCESS Line (DOH): 832-3100**)

**Religious resources:** Contact your place of worship...church, temple, synagogue

Internet Resources (check on their "Links," too):

1. **mr.dad** ([mrdad.com](http://mrdad.com))
2. **fathers.com** ([fathers.com](http://fathers.com))
3. **Boot Camp For New Dads** ([newdads.com](http://newdads.com))
4. **National Fatherhood Initiative** ([fatherhood.org](http://fatherhood.org))
5. **Dad at a Distance** ([daads.com](http://daads.com))